1 BEFORE THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION 2 COMMISSIONERS 3 MARC SPITZER, Chairman JIM IRVIN 4 WILLIAM A. MUNDELL JEFF HATCH-MILLER MIKE GLEASON 6 IN THE MATTER OF: DOCKET NO. S-03413A-01-0000 CLAY EUGENE LAMBERT 3711 East Minton Place 8 DECISION NO. ____66403_ Mesa, AZ 85215 CRD No. 1959853 Respondent. **OPINION AND ORDER** 10 DATE OF HEARING: January 28, 2003 11 PLACE OF HEARING: Phoenix, Arizona 12 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE: Philip J. Dion III 13 APPEARANCES: Anthony Bingham, Special Assistant 14 Attorney General, on behalf of the Securities Division of the Arizona 15 Corporation Commission. 16 BY THE COMMISSION: 17 18 PROCEDURAL HISTORY 19 On September 26, 2001, the Securities Division ("Division") of the Arizona Corporation 20 Commission ("Commission") filed a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing Regarding Proposed Order 21 To Cease And Desist, For Restitution, For Administrative Penalties, For Revocation, And For Other 22 Affirmative Action ("Notice") against Clay Eugene Lambert ("Respondent") in which the Division 23 alleged violations of the Securities Act of Arizona ("Securities Act") in connection with the offer 24 and sale of securities. 25 Respondent was duly served with the Notice on September 28, 2001. 26 On October 3, 2001, Respondent filed a request for a hearing and for a pre-hearing 27 conference through his attorney, Michael Salcido. A Procedural Order was issued scheduling a pre-28

hearing conference for November 26, 2001.

On November 6, 2001, Respondent filed a Chapter 13 bankruptcy case in the United States Bankruptcy Court, District of Arizona, Phoenix Division. ¹

On November 21, 2001, Mr. Salcido filed a letter stating that Respondent had filed a petition for bankruptcy under Chapter 13. In his letter, Mr. Salcido argued that the administrative action and the pre-hearing conference scheduled for November 26, 2001 were stayed pursuant to the automatic stay provision in the bankruptcy code. In its Response, the Division contended that an exception to the automatic stay in bankruptcy for the continuation of an action by a governmental unit to enforce its police and regulatory powers allowed the administrative proceeding against Respondent to go forward.

On November 26, 2001, the pre-hearing conference was held. Respondent was represented by Mr. Salcido, who argued that the bankruptcy case stayed the administrative proceeding before the Commission. The Division reiterated its argument that an exemption to the automatic stay allowed the proceeding to go forward.

On January 10, 2002, a Procedural Order was issued by the Commission. Each party was ordered to file a brief regarding whether the automatic stay pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 362 was applicable to the administrative proceeding. The Procedural Order also set a hearing for March 5, 2002.

On January 31, 2002, the Division filed a brief regarding the inapplicability of the automatic stay in bankruptcy to the administrative proceeding.

On February 1, 2002, Mr. Salcido filed for Respondent a document titled "Lambert's Position Re: Bankruptcy."

On February 22, 2002, a Procedural Order was issued finding that the automatic stay was not applicable to the administrative proceeding against Respondent. The hearing date of March 5, 2002 was affirmed.

United States Bankruptcy Court, District of Phoenix, Arizona, Case Number 01-014885 PHX-RTB.

On March 1, 2002, Respondent filed a Motion to Continue the hearing set for March 5, 2002. The purpose of the motion was to allow Mr. Salcido time to be appointed by the bankruptcy court to represent Respondent in this matter and to obtain permission from the bankruptcy court to incur legal fees on behalf of Respondent. Subsequently, a telephonic conference was held to discuss the Motion to Continue.

On March 11, 2002, after the telephonic conference, a Procedural Order was issued that continued the hearing to April 10, 2002.

On April 8, 2002, Mr. Salcido filed a Notice of Withdrawal of Counsel.

On April 10, 2002, the parties appeared for the scheduled hearing in this matter. Respondent was represented by Mr. Salcido at the hearing. Attorney Lawrence Moon was present and willing to replace Mr. Salcido as counsel for Respondent. Mr. Salcido's Motion to Withdraw as counsel was denied, and a ruling was made that Mr. Moon and Mr. Salcido would represent Respondent as co-counsel with Mr. Moon as lead counsel. Based on this ruling, the hearing was continued to June 3, 2002.

On May 24, 2002, Mr. Salcido, on behalf of Respondent, filed with the Commission a second Motion to Stay the administrative proceeding. Mr. Salcido stated in the Motion that his client had just learned he was being criminally investigated by the Attorney General's office regarding the same set of facts and circumstances as in this matter. Respondent requested expedited oral argument on the motion. On May 29, 2002, the Division filed a response to this motion, and on May 30, 2002, a hearing was held on Respondent's motion. Both parties appeared with counsel.² Based on the information presented, a short continuance of the hearing was granted.

On June 3, 2002, Mr. Moon, as counsel for Respondent, filed in the United States Bankruptcy Court a petition to enforce the automatic stay in bankruptcy or in the alternative, an application for an expedited order to show cause. A notice of this filing with a copy of the petition was filed with the Commission on June 11, 2002. On June 18, 2002, the Division filed a response to the petition in the United States Bankruptcy Court.

² Mr. Lambert was present at the hearing.

On June 11, 2002, Respondent was criminally indicted on one count of fraudulent schemes and artifices, one count of theft, three counts of forgery and three counts of insurance fraud.³ The indictment counts arise from some of the same facts alleged in the Notice. None of the counts in the indictment are for violations of the Securities Act.

On June 19, 2002, a hearing was held in bankruptcy court to address the petition filed by Respondent. Both parties appeared by counsel and presented brief arguments. The judge signed an order holding that the administrative proceeding against Respondent is exempt from the automatic stay in bankruptcy, that the Commission can enter an order to cease and desist, an order for restitution and penalties and that the Commission can revoke or suspend Respondent's Arizona securities registration.

On June 21, 2002, a Procedural Order was issued, and based upon the criminal indictment of Respondent, the hearing was reset to September 23, 2002. Additionally, Respondent's motion filed with the Commission to stay the administrative proceeding was denied.

On July 25, 2002, Mr. Salcido and Mr. Moon jointly filed a motion to withdraw as legal counsel for Respondent. One of the reasons they sought to withdraw from representing Respondent was that Respondent had not contacted his attorneys for over a month. A hearing was held on this motion and Mr. Salcido and Mr. Moon were allowed to withdraw as counsel of record.

On September 12, 2002, the Division filed a motion for a pre-hearing status conference to discuss the attendance of Respondent at the hearing scheduled for September 23, 2002. As of September 12, 2002, Respondent was incarcerated in the Maricopa County Jail on a bench warrant for his failure to appear at his arraignment on the charges in the criminal matter.

On September 23, 2002, a procedural conference, instead of a hearing, was held. Due to Respondent's incarceration, the hearing in this matter was rescheduled to January 28, 2003. After the procedural conference, Respondent's criminal defense attorney⁴ confirmed with counsel for the Division that Respondent was aware of the hearing date on January 28, 2003. A letter from the

³ CR 2002-010391 in the Maricopa County Superior Court.

⁴ The criminal defense attorney did not represent Respondent in this matter.

Division was delivered to Respondent's criminal defense attorney confirming the hearing date of January 28, 2003. The Division's hearing exhibits also accompanied this letter. With permission of Respondent's criminal defense attorney, the same letter was sent to Respondent at an address provided by his attorney. This letter was mailed certified mail, return receipt requested, and the Division received the signed green return receipt card evidencing that Respondent received this letter.

On January 28, 2003, the hearing was held as scheduled. Counsel for the Division appeared. Neither Respondent, nor any counsel for Respondent appeared at the hearing. On the date of the hearing, the Division stated that Respondent was no longer incarcerated and therefore, could have attended the hearing. The presiding officer found that Respondent had more than adequate notice of the hearing and had not sought a continuance. The hearing then proceeded against the Respondent in absentia.

At the hearing, the Division presented testimony from two witnesses, Lisa Busse and Tom Woods. Mrs. Busse is employed with the Division as an investigator and assisted with the investigation of this matter. Mr. Woods, along with his wife, were the only investors with Respondent. A total of fifty-three exhibits were admitted into evidence in the course of the hearing.

On March 26, 2003, Respondent entered into a criminal plea agreement in Maricopa County Superior Court. Respondent pled guilty to theft as a class three felony and forgery as a class four felony. Besides acting as an insurance agent and financial advisor to Mr. and Mrs. Woods, Respondent also worked as a bookkeeper for a company owned by the Woods. The criminal charges arose out of Respondent's tenure as the bookkeeper. Respondent forged Mr. Woods' signature on the company's checks and cashed the checks for his benefit.

On March 31, 2003, the Division filed a Proposed Procedural History, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order. In that filing, the Division requested that the Commission order the Respondent to cease and desist his actions, pay an administrative fee of \$60,000 and restitution in the amount of \$451,700 with interest and revoke Respondent's registration as a securities salesman in Arizona.

On May 2, 2003, the Court accepted the plea agreement and sentenced Respondent to 3.25 years prison, a probation tail of 5 years and ordered Respondent to pay \$238,323.50 in restitution to the Woods.

* * * * * * * * * *

Having considered the entire record herein and being fully advised in the premises, the Commission finds, concludes, and orders that:

FINDINGS OF FACT

- 1. Respondent's last known address is 1901B West Falcon Way, Amado, AZ 86545.
- 2. Respondent was registered with the Commission as a securities salesman through different securities dealers for much of the time period from March 4, 1993, to July 17, 2000.
- 3. Respondent did not register the securities in this matter or receive an exemption from the Commission to sell securities. Likewise, Respondent failed to register with the Commission as a securities dealer during the relevant time period.
- 4. The evidence presented showed that in 1991, Respondent met Tom and Becky Woods, a married couple, through Becky Wood's parents whom had purchased insurance from Respondent. The evidence further demonstrated that over the next several years, Respondent was the insurance agent and financial adviser for the Woods and the two companies they owned and operated. Mr. Wood testified that during these years, Respondent befriended the Woods and became well acquainted with them on a personal and financial level. At all relevant times herein, the Woods lived in the Chandler, Arizona area.
- 5. The evidence established that sometime before October 1994, Respondent approached the Woods to solicit them for an investment with him in a North Dakota farm he claimed to have previously purchased from his father-in-law. The evidence also shows that Respondent claimed to own the farmland without any encumbrances. The evidence further established that Respondent told the Woods he could make them a lot more money than what they were currently earning from their investments, and that Respondent would repay them from profits generated from operating the farm.

- 6. Evidence in the form of checks presented at the hearing showed the Woods invested \$150,000 with Respondent to finance farming operations on the farm Respondent claimed to own in North Dakota. For their investment, Respondent issued the Woods a promissory note dated October 3, 1994, with his signature on it. The interest rate on the note was fifteen percent per year.
- 7. The evidence established that around May 1996, Respondent solicited the Woods for a second investment telling them he needed more money from them to purchase additional farmland.
- 8. Testimony and documents introduced into evidence at the hearing show the Woods invested \$200,000 with Respondent pursuant to a promissory note dated May 15, 1996. The Woods gave Respondent a check for \$100,000 and transferred by wire into Respondent's bank account in North Dakota another \$100,000. The memo line on the check reads "Investment/Land". For this investment, the Woods received the promissory note dated May 15, 1996, payable to W.C. Contracting, Inc., a company operated by Mr. Woods. This note was to pay interest at the rate of twelve percent annually. This note was signed by Respondent and by Mr. Woods as President of W.C. Contracting, Inc.
- 9. Both promissory notes contained a term requiring Respondent to maintain term life insurance on his life payable to the payee of each note in an amount sufficient to pay the principal and accrued interest in full should the Respondent die. Mr. Woods testified he relied on this term in both notes and considered it vital in the decision to invest with Respondent.
- 10. Despite Respondent's guarantee in the two promissory notes that he would maintain a term life insurance policy on his life payable to the Woods, the evidence introduced at the hearing proved that he failed to follow through with this promise. In an Agricultural Financial Statement to Norwest Bank, signed by Respondent and his wife on March 24, 1997, Respondent stated he had two life insurance policies in the total amount of \$900,000 payable to his wife as the only beneficiary. Furthermore, in September 2001, Respondent's legal counsel, in response to a letter from the Division, acknowledged that Respondent never held term life insurance or any other insurance on his life payable to either or both of the Woods.

11. The evidence demonstrates that the third and last investment the Woods made with Respondent was by a check dated April 23, 1997, in the amount of \$101,700 payable to Respondent. The evidence shows that prior to this investment by the Woods, Respondent solicited them for money to purchase more farm equipment and for farming operations. Mr. Woods testified he never received from Respondent a promissory note for this investment. Mr. Woods said he expected the terms of this investment to be like the terms of the prior two investments. Mr. Woods also stated he expected Respondent to maintain life insurance on his life payable to the Woods in an amount sufficient to pay the principal and accrued interest in full on this third investment should the Respondent die.

- 12. Information in the Agricultural Financial Statement completed and signed by Respondent and his wife on March 24, 1997, demonstrated that Respondent did not own any farmland in North Dakota until 1995. This is contrary to what Respondent told the Woods before their October 1994 investment.
- 13. Exhibits entered into evidence show that in March 1995, August 1995, August 1996 and on an unknown date in 1996, Respondent mortgaged farmland he owned in North Dakota. Mr. Woods testified that Respondent never disclosed to the Woods that the farmland was encumbered with a mortgage.
- 14. The evidence proves that in early April 2001, Respondent sold all the farmland he owned. The Woods did not receive any proceeds from the sale of the farmland.
- 15. Mr. Woods testified that neither he nor his wife were involved in any of the operations of the farm, including how their money was spent. The evidence shows that Respondent never told the Woods about a particular piece of farmland or specific expenses for operating the farm.
- 16. Mr. Woods testified that neither he nor his wife had any experience in agriculture. The Woods relied solely upon Respondent to run the farm and generate profits from the farm.
- 17. The evidence established that the Woods did not receive any principal or interest payments from Respondent on their investments.

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18. The evidence shows that Respondent never presented any financial information to the Woods about the farm in North Dakota before their first investment in October 1994. Mr. Woods testified that Respondent did show one income statement for the farm to the Woods sometime after their first investment. According to the income statement, the farm returned over eighteen percent profit for that year. Mr. Woods testified that Respondent presented only one balance sheet for the farm to the Woods. That balance sheet was shown to the Woods in connection with their second investment in May 1996. Other than being shown one income statement and one balance sheet, Mr. Woods stated they were never shown any other financial information and did not have access to any financial information or statements regarding Respondent's farm.

- 19. Mr. Woods testified that on several occasions, the Woods asked Respondent about their investments. Mr. Woods further testified that Respondent always assured them that their money was being reinvested in the farm and the farm was doing well. Mr. Woods also said that Respondent told the Woods that anytime they needed some of their invested money back, they could ask for it and he would return the money to them.
- 20. The evidence shows that Respondent viewed the money he received from the Woods as investments not as loans. Two statements created by Respondent, both dated in 1995, show the balance for each investment in the Woods securities portfolio. Both statements show the balance of \$150,000 for "INVESTMENT C. LAMBERT." The Woods second and third investments with Respondent do not appear on these statements because the statements were created after their first investment and before their second investment.
- 21. The evidence established that from January 1999 to mid December 1999, Respondent was the bookkeeper for a company owned and operated by the Woods called Direct Utility Contractors, LLC. Mr. Woods testified that besides keeping the books for the company, Respondent printed all the company checks and delivered them to Mr. Woods for his signature.
- 22. The exhibits entered into evidence reflect that from January 20, 1999, to December 5, 1999, Respondent misappropriated \$305,404.36 from Direct Utility Contractors, LLC's checking account. The evidence demonstrates that Respondent accomplished this by signing Mr. Wood's

name to twenty-four checks and making one withdrawal from the business checking account, all without authorization from Mr. Woods. The checks were payable to Lambert Financial Group, LLC, except for one that was payable to Clay Lambert. The unauthorized withdrawal was deposited into the bank account of Lambert Financial Group, LLC. Lambert Financial Group, LLC, which was located in Mesa, Arizona, was owned and operated by Respondent who transacted his securities and insurance business through this limited liability company. ⁵

- 23. The evidence proved that, initially, Mr. Woods only discovered the checks misappropriated in November and December 1999. These checks totaled \$41,080.86. The evidence further showed that Mr. Woods confronted Respondent regarding these misappropriated checks; Respondent apologized to Mr. Woods; admitted to misappropriating the money, and in February, 2000, Respondent delivered to the Woods a cashier's check for \$41,080.86 as restitution.
- 24. The evidence established that in early 1999, the Woods asked Respondent for the return of \$100,000 from the money they had invested with him. The evidence shows that Respondent told the Woods he would obtain the money from his bank account in North Dakota. Unbeknownst to the Woods, Respondent wrote three letters to an insurance company to acquire approximately \$100,000 from an annuity he had previously sold the Woods. Two of these letters had the purported signatures of Tom and Becky Woods. One of these three letters was signed by Respondent.
- 25. In April 1999, the insurance company mailed two checks from the annuity account to the Woods. The evidence shows that when the Woods discovered the source of funds for the two checks was from their annuity account, they returned the checks to the insurance company with a cover letter directing that the checks be deposited back into the their annuity account.
- 26. Mr. Woods testified that the Woods never knew about any of the letters sent to the insurance company. He further stated they did not authorize Respondent to sign their names on any of the letters or request any money from the insurance company.
 - 27. On May 2, 2003, Respondent was convicted on one count of theft, a Class 3 felony

These are the underlying facts and circumstances of the criminal case.

and one count of forgery, a Class 4 felony in the Superior Court of Maricopa County. The criminal charges arose from Respondent's felonious behavior while employed as a bookkeeper for a company the Woods owned.

- 28. We hereby adopt the procedural history as set forth above.
- 29. Based upon the evidence presented in this case and Respondent's subsequent criminal felony convictions, we find that Respondent should pay restitution to the Woods, be assessed a fine and his registration as a securities salesman in Arizona should be revoked.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1. The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Article XV of the Arizona Constitution and the Securities Act.
- 2. Respondent offered and sold securities in the form of promissory notes on or about October 3, 1994 and May 15, 1996, within the definition of A.R.S. §§ 44-1801(15), 44-1801(21), and 44-1801(26).
- 3. Respondent offered and sold a security in the form of an investment contract and evidence of indebtedness on or about April 23, 1997, within the definition of A.R.S. §§ 44-1801(15), 44-1801(21), and 44-1801(26).
- 4. Respondent violated A.R.S. § 44-1841 by offering and selling securities that were neither registered, nor exempt from registration.
- 5. Respondent violated A.R.S. § 44-1842 by offering and selling securities while neither registered as a dealer, nor exempt from registration.
- 6. Respondent violated A.R.S. § 44-1991 by making untrue statements or misleading omissions of material facts, and engaging in transactions, practices or courses of business which operate or would operate as a fraud or deceit. Respondent's conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:
 - a. making untrue statements to the Woods before their first investment in October 1994, that he had purchased his father-in-law's farm, when in fact, he had not yet purchased the farm;

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- failing to disclose to the Woods that most if not all of the farmland he purchased would be encumbered with a mortgage or other lien that he would be required to service from farm income;
- c. failing to disclose to the Woods financial statements about his farming operations in North Dakota other than one income statement after the Wood's first investment and one balance sheet in connection with the Wood's second investment;
- d. failing to disclose to the Woods the specific parcels of farmland and the specific operational expenses their investment monies were to be used for; and
- e. making untrue statements to the Woods that he would maintain term life insurance on his life payable to the couple as beneficiaries in an amount sufficient to pay the principal and accrued interest of their investments when in fact he never did maintain such insurance.
- 7. Respondent's conduct necessitates an order of revocation pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-1962(A)(4), (9), and (10).
- 8. Respondent's conduct is grounds for a cease and desist order pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2032.
- 9. Respondent's conduct is grounds for an order of restitution pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2032.
 - 10. Restitution in the amount of \$451,700⁶ is reasonable in this case.
- 11. Respondent's conduct is grounds for an administrative penalty pursuant to A.R.S. § 44-2036.
 - 12. An administrative penalty of \$60,000 is reasonable in this case.

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Decision No.

Restitution for the misappropriated checks and the one unauthorized withdrawal by Respondent are not included in this amount because the Commission is unable to order restitution for those transactions under the Securities Act since they are not related to the offer or sale of securities. However, it appears that those sums were accounted for in the criminal case as Respondent was ordered to pay restitution in that matter.

ORDER

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under A.R.S. § 44-2032, Respondent shall cease and desist from his actions described hereinabove in violation of A.R.S. §§ 44-1841, 44-1842, and 44-1991.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under A.R.S. § 44-2032, Respondent shall pay restitution in the amount of \$451,700 plus accrued interest for the three investments dated October 3, 1994, May 15, 1996 and April 23, 1997, within sixty days of the effective date of this Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the restitution ordered hereinabove shall bear interest for the first investment from October 3, 1994, at the rate of fifteen percent per year, for the second investment from May 15, 1996, at the rate of twelve percent per year, and for the last investment from April 23, 1997, at the rate of ten percent per year.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that restitution shall be made payable to the "State of Arizona" to be deposited into an interest-bearing account, if appropriate, until distribution is made.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under A.R.S. § 44-2036, Respondent shall pay as administrative penalties: for the violations of A.R.S. § 44-1841, the sum of \$15,000; for the violations of A.R.S. § 44-1842, the sum of \$15,000, and for the violations of A.R.S. § 44-1991, the sum of \$30,000, for total penalties of \$60,000, within sixty days of the effective date of this Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that administrative penalties shall be made payable to the "State of Arizona" for deposit into the general fund of the State of Arizona.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the administrative penalties ordered hereinabove shall bear interest at the rate of ten percent per year for any outstanding balance from sixty dates of the effective date of this Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that pursuant to the authority granted to the Commission under A.R.S. § 44-1962, Respondent Lambert's registration as a securities salesman in Arizona is revoked.

1	IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Securities Division shall attempt to personally serv		
2	Respondent with a copy of this Decision within thirty days of the effective date of this Decision.		
3	IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Division shall file an affidavit in this docket stating		
4	how Respondent was served with a copy of this Decision within sixty days of the effective date o		
5	this Decision.		
6	IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Decision is effective regardless of service upon		
7	Respondent.		
8	IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order shall become effective immediately.		
9	BY ORDER OF THE ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION		
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11	CHAIRMAN	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER
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13	COMMISSIONER	COMMISSIONER	
14		IN WITNESS WHEREOF	I, JAMES G. JAYNE, Executive
15		Secretary of the Arizona	Corporation Commission, have caused the official seal of the
16		Commission to be affixed	at the Capitol, in the City of, 2003.
17		Thoums, this day of	, 2000.
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19		JAMES G. JAYNE Interim Executive Secretary	
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2	SERVICE LIST FOR:	Clay Eugene Lambert		
3	DOCKET NO.	S-03413A-01-0000		
4	Bruce E. Blumberg			
5	45 W. Jefferson, Ste. 210 Phoenix, AZ 85003-2325			
6	For delivery to Respondent			
7	Moira McCarthy Assistant Attorney General			
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9	1275 West Washington Street Phoenix, Arizona 85007			
10	Mark Sendrow, Director Securities Division			
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